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ABSTRACT

Time spent on disciplining children in the classroom is time taken away from achieving the objectives of instruction. The classroom teacher needs to have appropriate guidelines to use in teaching as well as specific workable procedures which help students to achieve. This paper discusses various methods of classroom discipline. The paper first discusses problem solving procedures which emphasize teachers observing a contextual problem in disciplining students in an ongoing lesson or unit of study. It points out that problem solving does not stress: absolutes; predetermined, ready-made answers to problems; quick solutions to problems (but rather deliberation); hierarchical arrangements of individuals; and intent of people involved in decision making. The paper next discusses behaviorism, which stresses predetermined, measurably stated objectives used to develop an appropriate learning environment--objectives pertaining to classroom discipline are determined by the teacher and printed clearly for all students to see and understand. According to the paper, Traynor (2002) identifies the following approaches used by teachers in discipline: coercive; laissez faire; task oriented; authoritative; and intrinsic. The paper notes that a teacher's being well prepared for each day of teaching should help curb discipline problems. It suggests that specific methods that may be used to encourage good discipline are a time out area in the classroom and positive reinforcement. The paper quotes the behaviorist B.F. Skinner stating that the most important task of the teacher is to arrange conditions under which desired learning can occur. (Contains 11 references.) (NKA)

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Reading and Quality Discipline in the Classroom.

by Marlow Ediger

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READING AND QUALITY DISCIPLINE IN THE CLASSROOM

The teacher who spends much time on disciplining pupils may find that instructional time is minimized and hindered. There needs to be a classroom which is conducive to teachers teaching and pupils learning. The noise level needs to be kept down to a point whereby pupils can learn and achieve optimally in each curriculum area. Time spent on discipling children is time taken away from achieving the objectives of instruction. The teacher in the classroom needs to have appropriate guidelines to use in teaching as well as specific workable procedures which help pupils to achieve.

Philosophy and Psychology of Classroom Discipline

Problem solving procedures emphasize teachers observing a contextual problem in disciplining pupils in an ongoing lesson or unit of study. The identified problem is clearly stated so that it can be solved. Information is gathered from a variety of reference sources and or from reflective thinking. The teacher then develops a tentative answer to the problem. The answer is an hypothesis, ready for evaluating in the classroom setting. Should the hypothesis not work, additional information and reflective thinking is involved with a new hypothesis forth coming. Even a new problem may be developed along the way in problem solving procedures.

Problem solving procedures do not stress throwing the hands up in frustration, feeling that nothing can be done to minimize disruptions in the classroom. The problem solver stays with it and works on solutions until one is found.

Problem solving stresses the practical endeavors with in the school setting. Real nd life like situations are in the offing. Practical solutions are found to problematic situations. It is best if a set of teachers cooperatively identify and solve problems. However, a single teacher may also engage in problem solving philosophy and psychology. Sequential stages in problem solving are developed within the teacher, not decided upon externally. Teachers then intrinsically identify and solve problems. Consultant help and assistance may be asked for and used by involved teachers, as the need arises. Creativity is inherent since novel, unique solutions are needed to solve problems. The "tried" and "true" may not work in solving a problematic situation. Problem solving does not stress

1. absolutes, but uses flexibility in the identification and solving of problems.

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2. predetermined, ready made answers and solutions to problems, but rather personal initiative.

3. quick solutions to problems, but rather deliberation, thought, and perseverance.

4. hierarchical arrangements of individuals, but rather all can be involved in problem solving who are affected by the decision. Thus, a teacher may develop standards of conduct with pupils in a classroom and cooperatively enforce, in educationally sound ways, adherence to these standards.

5. intents of people involved in decision making, but rather the consequences of the act are viewed in the disciplinary arena, as well as in other areas of the curriculum (Dewey, 1916).

Behaviorism as a psychology of education may also be called realism in the philosophical arena. Behaviorism stresses predetermined measurably stated objectives in their use to develop an appropriate learning environment. The objectives pertaining to classroom discipline are determined by the teacher and printed clearly for all pupils to see and understand. The meaning of each measurably stated objective needs to be clarified and understood by learners. It is clear then to pupils if they have violated a standard. Either a pupil has/has not broken a rule. There is no guesswork involved.

Realists believe in the certainty of knowledge. Only what can be verified by others is true. True knowledge can be tested to see if it is upheld by others, using the same methods. Scientific methods are used to ascertain knowledge and skills. Attitudes of objectivity are needed. Supernaturalism does not exist since it goes beyond sense data. Objective thinking is inherent. The emotions and feelings of individuals are to be left out when securing information. Precision and accuracy are necessary when objectives are stated, implemented, and evaluated (Ediger and Rao, 2003, Chapter One).

Traynor (2002) identifies the following approaches used by teachers in school discipline:

1. coercive: A teacher using a coercive strategy to maintain order uses intimidation and expressions of anger. This approach is characterized by the use of sarcasm, yelling, threatening, and demeaning students.

2. laissez faire: teacher tolerance of learner behavior with pupils being permitted to govern their very own behavior individually. No external means are generally used to discipline pupil behavior.

3. task orientated: the teacher tries to keep pupils busy with non-purposeful as well as purposeful leaning activities.

4. authoritative: the teacher individually develops rules of conduct and strictly enforces them with no pupil involvement.
5. intrinsic methods of disciplining pupil behavior whereby pupils learn to govern their own conduct (Traynor, 2002).

It is an ideal to guide pupils to govern themselves in the disciplinary arena. From within, the pupil then has standards which govern relationships between the self and others. To do this, problem solving would definitely be involved since the learner realizes that there are difficulties which need identification and solutions found.

Being Well Prepared for Teaching

Being well prepared for each day of teaching should help to curb discipline problems. It is salient to plan, for each lesson, those activities which engage the learner in the curriculum. Active involvement in learning opportunities helps to maintain learner attention in ongoing activities. Passive learners tend not to comprehend nor care for what is being taught. The objectives, the aligned learning activities, and appraisal procedures should all interrelate into a whole.

The following criteria should then be used by teachers in planning the curriculum:

1. the interests of pupils should be aroused so that learners pay careful attention to each ongoing lesson. If pupils lack interest in learning, the attention span might lack focus and encourage behavioral problems. Disruptive behavior is not helpful to both the teacher and pupils in a classroom. Pupils lose valuable instructional time due to inattentive behavior. To learn as much as possible, pupils need to attend to that which is taught in order to attain objectives of instruction.

The use of voice inflection can do much to secure learner interest in the ensuing lesson. Thus proper intonation, stress, pitch, and juncture, as well as eye contact, should aide in obtaining learner attention to what is being presented.

2. the needs of each pupil must be met so that increased time is placed upon learning. These needs may include developing feelings of belonging to a group and as well as feeling accepted. To be an isolate must be painful due to a school setting being a social setting. Positive interaction with others and being accepted as one having worth is extremely important. Worrying about being called negative names must make for feelings of being uneasy and apprehensive. Needs of pupils may also emphasize meeting esteem goals. Thus, a pupil

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desires to be recognized for what can be achieved well. Pupils individually have their strengths and these need identification and use.

3. the purposes of pupils need to be increased so that reasons for learning are apparent. The teacher should assist pupils to perceive values in what is to be accomplished. A lack of purpose for learning makes it so that pupils are uncertain as to what has value to acquire. The purpose needs to be stated clearly by the teacher for pupils pursing objectives in each lesson. This may take a minute of time. An inductive procedure might also be used. If the teacher has pupils speculate on what the purpose of a lesson is, then induction is involved and more time would be needed here, as compared to using deduction with the teacher stating reasons for the ongoing learning activity.

4. adequate background information needs to be a part of the pupil's repertoire so that the previous lesson is related directly to the new learning opportunities. If subject matter to be acquired is unrelated to what is known presently, the pupil may not be able to hurdle the gap between the new and the old learnings. It is well worth the teacher's time to make certain that each pupil has the prerequisites in order to benefit fully from the ensuing experiences.

5. meaningful subject matter and skills must be presented. With meaning, the pupil understands what is taught and can benefit from the instruction. If pupils do not understand what is taught, nonsense learnings might well be in evidence. To bridge the gap between previous content acquired and nonsense learning is not possible. The teacher or a knowledgeable peer needs to assist learners within large group, committee endeavors, as well as individually to attach meaning to what is being taught.

6. a variety of materials needs to be used in the teaching and learning arena. Pupils differ from each other in terms of what kinds of instructional materials are most beneficial. Concrete (objects, realia, and items), semiconcrete (illustrations, video tapes, pictures, slides, filmstrips films, CD ROMS, the internet, among other pictorial forms). and the abstract (listening, speaking, reading, and writing activities) should be used as teaching methods and materials to provide for individual differences among learners (See Fisher, et. al., 2002).

7. learning styles of pupils need adequate attention in teaching and learning. Thus selected pupils work best together in a group setting whereas others do best in studying by the self. Flexible grouping patterns may be used to provide for different styles of pupil learning. Paying attention to the

conditions of learning is time well spent. Each pupil's learnings should be optimized and teachers attending to styles of learning might well help (See , Searson and Dunn, 2001) .

8. multiple intelligences need to be recognized and adequately provided for. Pupils differ from each other in terms of strengths possessed. Pupil A might like and be strong in mathematics and the ability to reason therein. Pupil B might have equivalent strengths in mathematics but achieve at a higher level in verbal skills such as in reading and writing. The two curriculum areas mentioned do interact with each other in that reading is required in both. In addition to reading word problems, pupils also need to learn to read mathematics symbols. In the area of writing, pupils do write across the curriculum, including mathematics. However, working with numeracy is the heart of the mathematics curriculum whereas literacy is the major goal of verbal intelligence. Thus, teachers do need to pay adequate attention to the intelligence(s) possessed by a pupil and develop these optimally (See Gardner, 1998).

9. quality sequence in learning must be provided for. The previously acquired learnings must seamlessly harmonize with the new content. From the pupil's perspective, he/she needs to experience a psychological sequence whereby the learner, with teacher guidance, orders his/her very own experiences as in choosing sequential library books to read in individualized reading. A logical sequence emphasizes the teacher selecting the order of learning opportunities for pupils to pursue. The belief here is that the teacher, with his/her educational teacher training, is in the best position to select the order of activities for learners individually to pursue.

10. evaluation of achievement might well be done intrinsically such as the pupil with teacher guidance assessing the self in terms of desired criteria. Portfolios developed by the pupil with teacher help may also involve intrinsic procedures. Opposite would be extrinsic evaluation procedures such as state mandated testing, teacher written tests, standardized testing, an teacher observation.

A well planned series of lessons and units of study need to actively involve pupils individually, so that optimal learning is taking place. Pupils need to experience quality learning opportunities so that instructional time increases and discipline problems become less. Obtaining pupil attention is a key item in teaching and learning situations. Pupils who do not attend find time for day dreaming and entertaining others during instructional sessions. Thus, it is salient to establish set

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whereby a pupil pays attention to the beginning aspects of a lesson being taught (See Ratckin, et. al., 1985).

Additional times also need to be given to establishing set other than at the beginning of a unit of study only. What is it that establishes set? This can be something which truly does obtain pupil attention, such as the following:

1. an enlarged illustration which all can see that indicates a key idea in a fascinating way. The teacher might then have pupils brain storm what they see in the illustration. Each idea is to be respected and accepted. Pupils, individually, may even write what they see. Each item is numbered and there is no duplication of oral or written ideas. These kinds of activities involve all pupils in active learning. After the written brainstorming session, pupils in committees of four members may join together those concepts listed which overlap.

2. objects from a unique culture, relating directly to the unit taught, being displayed on a table or held up for all to see to captures pupil attention. Brainstorming again is possible as to how each object is used or stating which culture it came from, among other procedures. But, it also can be held up for all to see for a sequential, stimulating discussion. Unique objects can secure learner attention in a plethora of cases and situations.

3. learning activities with high pupil involvement should always be used. These include creative dramatics whereby learners use subject matter acquired to present a dramatization. Parts to be played can be worked out and eventually all should have a chance to perform in dramatizing subject matter known in a creative way. It is fascinating for pupils to think of what fits in, for their individual part, when performing in front of a class. The play parts are not memorized but inherent subject matter is well known so that each participant can contribute in a meaningful manner. If desired, the play parts from a unit may be written out by committees of pupils. After which, it can be decided who plays which part. Volunteering for each play part can be salient. However, just so everyone has a chance to be in the play, it might be necessary for the teacher to appoint these oral contributions.

Reader's theater can also involve many pupils. In fact, there can be a set of pupils for each reader's theater presentation. As the name indicates, pupils individually read their own play parts containing the direct quotation only. The script is right in front of the participant for oral reading. Each pupil is seated in a chair for the reader's theater presentation. The part should be practiced and polished for high quality oral reading. The background information, for the individual direct quotation read, should have

a separate reader who also has practiced the reading of the necessary ideas which provide structure for the direct quotes. The reader's theater, as well as the creative and formal dramatizations, may be performed in front of other classrooms of children. Receiving praise for doing well assists in developing the self concept of a learner. There might well be little time for misbehavior with stimulating learning opportunities.

Specific Methods in Handling Discipline Problems

The involved philosophies and psychologies, as well as improving the curriculum, are all good means of helping to develop a quality program of discipline. Then, too, there are specific methods which may be used as methods to encourage good discipline.

* A time out area should be available where a pupil goes to, after violating one or more rules off conduct. The time out area needs to be removed from other pupils in the classroom. It could be an enclosed small area in a classroom. This gives the pupil a chance to reflect upon correcting his/her behavior and then reentering the regular classroom for instructional purposes. The duration of time being in a time out area would be up to the teacher to decide and needs to be kept flexible. The pupil in the time out area may do school work or meditate upon what he/she would change. A time our area has helped pupils to redirect their behavior in a positive direction.

Developing a plan to reenter the classroom may be made by the pupil who has broken the rule of conduct. The pupil needs to state, when asked by the teacher, what he/she did when breaking the/a rule. This must come from the offender only, and be given orally to the teacher. The plan must state what the pupil will do to correct the offensive act. The pupil must agree not to do the same negative behavior when reentering the regular classroom. All rules of conduct are printed on a chart for all to see in the classroom.

* Positive reinforcement methods might be used. The late B. F. Skinner was a leading proponent of behaviorism Shankaranarayana (1990) wrote the following:

For Skinner (1969), "Teaching is an arrangement of contingencies of reinforcement which expedite learning." Skinner believes that promotion of learning is possible by giving attention to the following factors: the behavior to be learned, the reinforcers that may be used, and the scheduling of reinforcers.

Skinner recommends the use of programed instruction

which provides for individual differences by allowing students to achieve at their own rate of speed. In terms of Skinner's Operant behaviorism, "a program can be seen as an arrangement of material that will lead pupils to emit correct responses and will also provide reinforcement for that response... the essential elements of programmed instruction ... are (1) an ordered sequence of stimuli, (2), specific student response, (3) immediate knowledge of results, (4) small steps, (5) minimum errors (6) gradual shaping of terminal behavior.

According to Skinner then the most important task of the teacher is to arrange conditions under which desired learning can occur. Considering the fact that teachers are to bring about changes in extremely complex behavior, they should be specialists in human behavior. Effective and efficient manipulations of the multitude of variables affecting children's intellectual and social behaviors cannot be accomplished by trial and error alone, nor should such work be based solely on the personal experiences of the teacher, since this covers only a limited range of circumstances. Consequently, a scientific study of human behavior is vital in the improvement of teaching because it provides accurate and reliable knowledge about learning and leads to the development of new instructional materials, methods, and techniques. Similarly, an empirical analysis of the teaching process is essential, for it clarifies the teacher's responsibility through a series of small and progressive approximations. This approach makes teaching practices more specific, thereby facilitating a more effective evaluation (Morris and Pai, 1976).

Here, pupils individually or collective are rewarded for good behavior. Tenets of behavior modification are used in positive reinforcement. In other words, pupils are rewarded for exhibiting good behavior. The standard or standards for pupils to achieve are announced ahead of time so that each learner knows what to do to receive the reinforcement. The following announcement(s) might then be made, as examples:

1. each pupil who receives a 95 per cent or higher of words spelled correctly from the weekly list may choose a prize from the reward center. Small inexpensive prizes might then be in the offing such as a pencil, a rabbit shaped erasure, a piece of candy, among others. The author when supervising university student teachers in the public schools noticed that even an attractive picture cut from a discarded magazine, can make a good reward which a learner may choose for doing well, such as in spelling.

2. a popcorn party will be held Friday, before school dismissal, for all who have not violated rules, as posted in the standards of conduct, located on the bulletin board.

Pupils need to be certain they understand what a rule violation means. The standard may be upped, and then needs to be announced prior to the holding of the popcorn party.

3. inexpensive teacher aide made badges may be given as rewards for doing well.

The teacher needs to be creative and think of what might reward a pupil for doing well in class. These can then be given to deserving pupils.

* Problem solving procedures might be used to encourage good behavior. When a violation of a posted rule of conduct has occurred, the entire class might discuss possible solutions to the problem. The agreed upon solution may then be implemented. If the solution is inadequate, a new solution may be tried and implemented. A quality learning environment is necessary so that the teacher can teach well and pupils can learn in an optimal manner. Problem solving procedures take time, but have many inherent values. Thus, in school and in society, individuals alone or collectively, are always identifying and attempting to solve life like problems (Ediger and Rao, 2003, Chapter Eight).

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